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NEWS RELEASE

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Six New Charter Schools Approved by Public Education Commission

ALBUQUERQUE — Six new charter schools were approved Friday by the Public Education Commission, which means New Mexico families will soon have more choices when picking schools that meet student needs.

The schools will be located from Los Lunas to Taos, and are scheduled to open in the 2009-10 school year. As many as 680 students could show up for classes next school year at these combined locations.

"Public school choice is important in New Mexico, and I am pleased that families have more options," Secretary Veronica C. Garcia of the Public Education Department said. "The intent of Governor Richardson's charter school agenda is to offer more options within the existing public school system, and the agency is working hard to make that a reality."

The Charter School Division of the Public Education Department thoroughly reviewed charter school applications before recommending an approval or denial to the Public Education Commission. Charter schools are public, tuition-free schools that have unique academic missions. They are governed by their own boards, and must be approved either by the Public Education Commission or a local school board.

The Public Education Commission approved the following charter school applications on Friday. Locations are noted after each listing.

- School of Dreams Academy (Los Lunas)
- The New America School (Albuquerque)
- Cien Aguas International School (Albuquerque)
- The International School at Mesa del Sol (Albuquerque)
- New Mexico School for the Arts (Santa Fe)
- Taos Academy (Taos)

The following applications were denied:

- Henry David Thoreau High School (Albuquerque)
- The Resource and Learning Center (Moriarty)
- The MASTERS Program (Santa Fe)
- The Enchanted Circle (Taos)

The Ray of Hope Charter School from Albuquerque withdrew their application.

The Public Education Commission approved two new charter schools in 2007 – The Media Arts Collaborative Charter School and Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School. Both are located in Albuquerque.

Two other schools had their charters renewed by the Commission in 2007. Today's approvals bring the total number of charter schools in New Mexico to 73.

Applicants who were denied have 30 days to appeal those decisions to Secretary Garcia.

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